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February 20, 2004

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 02-60

Alliance Information Management is an information technology and telecommunications consulting firm based in Fargo, North Dakota. We take pride in delivering cost effective solutions to health care providers nationally.

Among our areas of concentration is the focus we place on rural health care. One of the solutions we offer to rural health care providers is out-tasking the application process for Universal Services Funding for Rural Health Care (RHCD). Since the inception of the RHCD program in 1996, associates at Alliance Information Management have worked closely with the funding program. Since 2002, we have committed resources to providing outreach and education to rural health care providers, telecommunication service providers, and associations. We have played an active role in the National Rural Health Association policy development relating to the RHCD program and regularly suggest, to the RHCD staff, improvements to their internal processes and systems. We are committed to making this program work for rural health care.

It is our sincere desire that the FCC intensify their efforts to make the program better. Fundamentally important is the need to reach out to health care providers through expanded marketing (outreach), education and support efforts. This is critical in order to encourage significantly more eligible health care providers to use the RHCD program as a component in their strategic arsenal to improve patient care and disease surveillance networks, while providing cost effective health care services to their communities.

If rural health care providers are not aware of the RHCD program, do not believe the program is appropriate for them, or become frustrated with the complexity of the application process, then the RHCD program has not fulfilled the objectives that Congress intended when it established this funding program in 1996. Outreach and education efforts, followed up with targeted application support initiatives, can help to overcome these barriers, enabling all eligible health care providers benefit from the program.

Sincerely,

Boni Ellis
Principal Consultant

CC: Senators Dorgan and Conrad
Rep. Earl Pomeroy
Tom Leary, HIMSS
John Supplitt, AHA
Alan Morgan, NRHA

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